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Democrat State Convention

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ADDRESS BY SENATOR MIKE MANSFIELD, MAJORITY LEADER, U. S. SENATE

DEMOCRATIC STATE CONVENTION

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 1970, 7 p.m.

HELENA, MONTANA

Mr. Chairman, Delegates to the Convention:

I address you this evening not as your Senator, which I am proud to be; not as your candidate for the United States Senate---which it is my good fortune to be; and not as the Senate's majority leader---which I happen to be. I address you rather as a Montanan---which I am first and foremost and which I shall always be.

I address you further as a Montanan who is most distressed. Distressed by what is happening---or I should say, what is still happening---abroad. But distressed as well by what is happening right here at home. Two words describe it. Crime and the economy.

TAKING FOREIGN POLICY FIRST,

Southeast Asia

Western Europe

Overseas Bases

Middle East

Taking the economy second, I can give you three more words: inflation, unemployment and war. What they all spell is recession. It is a fact. Not a political fact, but an economic fact. And all the talk about a brighter tomorrow does not alter it. To be sure, this state and this Nation have the basic strength that for the future promises a great deal.

But what about today? What about the family in Missoula who up to now has been saving to purchase a home of their own? Should they be made to wait still longer? And what about the housewife in Bozeman who cannot put off until tomorrow shopping for the groceries needed to feed her hungry family today.

To put it simply, inflation and tight money are very much still with us. They are with us and, in spite of the talk, are as severe today as they have been for the past year. Three years ago prices were up by 3 per cent; two years ago, by 4.6 per cent; and last year they rose 6.1 per cent. There has been no let up since. Inflation remains above the 6 per cent level today.

Interest rates have climbed to highs not seen in over 100 years. Home mortgages are often impossible to obtain. Five years ago the typical monthly payment on a \$20,000 home was \$115. To buy the same house today takes an outlay of \$205 a month. Inflated costs and high interest rates have meant the difference.

Look at unemployment. It was at 3.5 per cent just a year ago. Today it is up over 5 per cent. Here in Montana it is nearly 6.5 per cent. That's too many people out of work; too many construction workers, too many plasterers, carpenters, lumbermen. And the number continues to grow.

Since 1968, the price the farmer is paid for his crops has actually declined. But his costs have increased by 10 per cent. The take-home pay of miners and factory workers has fallen. Inflation has wiped out any wage increases. And I hardly need to mention that the housing industry---so important to our State and the Nation---is suffering a major depression and the lumber industry is not too far behind.

In short, the things that should be going up---take-home pay, home-building, and the stock market---are coming down.

And the

/things that should be coming down--interest rates, the cost of living and unemployment--are going up. Why? Because this Administration in Washington has chosen to adopt a hands-off policy and that policy has failed.

To fight inflation and restore the health of our economy will take action; the kind of action taken in the 60's when President Kennedy single-handedly forced a price roll-back in one of our basic industries. By comparison, this Administration has used few tools, indeed, to bring on economic stability. Congress, I am proud to say, has done its share and more. It has been quick to give the President the few measures he has sought. But what he has sought has been clearly insufficient. So Congress has done even more. On its own initiative, it passed selective credit control authority to free more money for home loans. The President has failed to use this authority. On its own initiative, the Congress passed wage and price guideline authority. The President has failed to use this authority. On its own initiative, the Congress passed the Emergency Home Financing Act. To keep spending down, Congress cut \$6.4 billion out of the Administration's budget. Congress is paring down the budget again this year. Indeed, it has been on the initiative of Congress that the major efforts have been made to restore the economic health and welfare of the nation.

But in this area where strong administration leadership is lacking, the Congress cannot by itself, acting alone, restore fully the economic stability and growth that prevailed during the 1960's. Congress needs help. And it will continue to need help until strong leadership is forthcoming; until there are those who are willing to do what has to be done and to do it without weighing the close political implications involved.

Just as the Congress acting alone cannot restore the economy, the Congress cannot by itself provide safety in the streets or protection for the victims of crime and violence. But Congress must continue to try. And may I say that I am proud of the United States/^{Senate}with regard to its record in passing crime-fighting tools. The Senate has agreed to nearly every crime proposal the present Administration has sought and has originated several on its own in addition. The Senate has made the issue of crime in our streets its most important domestic priority.

But there is a greater responsibility involved with this issue also; a responsibility on each of us who deplores crime and violence so loudly with words, to face up to these problems and be willing to act with deeds as well.

Crime and violence, drug addiction, obscenity and raw pornography affect everyone. They ravage in particular those who visit and reside in our crowded and congested urban centers. But

as we know so well, they thrive right here in Montana.

To combat crime, to curb violence and drug traffic and to end the spread of filth and pornography will take more than just talk. It will take bold and dedicated efforts. There must be stiffer penalties for drug pushers, better facilities for addicts, more police on the beat and compensation for crime victims. The fight includes steps that may not be the most politically expedient. But they are steps that must be taken.

I do not pretend to have the answers to these problems. I am willing to try, however; and for my part, I have acted in three ways: First, I have authored or been a principal sponsor of crime-fighting and anti-obscenity proposals; second, I have voted for every major anti-crime, anti-drug and anti-pornography measure that has come before the Senate; third, as the Majority Leader of the Senate, I have done my best to help bring about Senate passage of nearly all major proposals to curb crime, drug abuse and pornography pending in the Congress.

Crime fighting measures, proposals to curb drug traffic and the like are just too important to play politics with. In considering them, however, I have found that talk is cheap. I have found it easy to deplore crime and violence with words; but politically, most difficult, when you endeavor to translate those words into action.

That was the case on the proposal aimed at crimes committed with guns.

I have been criticized for that vote. And that disturbs me. It was a vote against guns in the hands of the drug addict, the felon, the fugitive--- like the one who was identified through her gun record following the California courtroom shoot-out last month. It was a vote against anyone who seeks a firearm for crime. But this is what I meant when I said talk is cheap. We must be willing to do something about crime, drug addiction and obscenity; something perhaps like what is proposed in the Mansfield mandatory sentence bill which passed the Senate unanimously. It would impose a separate, additional and mandatory sentence against those who use a gun in committing a crime. Mandatory jail sentences may not be popular; but they may help to curb crime.

As we agree on the proposals to make it easier for law enforcement officers to apprehend their suspect, for judges to impose heavier sentences, for local communities to train their police with modern techniques and to pay them more, we must not accept these efforts as a solution. Eradication of what causes crime in the long run is the only solution. Aspirin for a headache caused by a brain tumor is not a long-range solution. Sending criminals to penitentiaries that serve as criminal breeding grounds is not a long-term solution. For every criminal that is sent to a prison, there is a hardened criminal who is being released by that prison back into society. This area of prison reform is a vital ingredient to solving our problems.

Providing more hope and better opportunities to the disadvantaged in our society will help eradicate the breeding grounds for crime. The emphasis must be shifted to these vital domestic needs. Bringing hope and opportunity to those in this country must be our first order of business. Last year the Federal Government spent about \$1,000 for each American. Over \$375 of each American's \$1,000 went to protect you from the Chinese, the North Vietnamese and the Soviet Union. Only \$2.40 went to protect you from the criminal in the street. This is where the emphasis must be changed. This is what the issue of national priorities is all about.

In closing, just let me say that all of us seek solutions to crime, an end to violence and a remedy for drug addiction. We do so with every consideration for the protections guaranteed the criminal under the Constitution. Just as emphatically, however, must the rights of the victim of crime be safeguarded. It is the victim who too often in the past has been neglected. Our first concern should be for him, for his suffering, his safety, and the safety of his family and neighbors. To that end must we continue to devote our efforts. As Montanans we can do no less.